

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, undated, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. July or August 1883. Oakland, Md. My dear Alec:

Poor Mr. Johnson I wonder what the end will be, if there is indeed no hope for him the sooner it comes the better for him. This dying by degrees seems to me almost the most horrible thing possible. How I hope he may get well after all.

Do take care of yourself. Even sadder is it to see a man cut off in the very midst of his usefulness than like Mr. Johnson in the preparation for life, and I cannot spare you my husband yet, or for many, many years. Do please be careful.

I am feeling the want of you very much today, or rather was for the immediate need has passed now. I will not be so horrid to you as you were to me this evening and will not put you off until tomorrow, but tell you how what has been exciting the winds of our little community today. Nothing more nor less than a regular diphtheria scare. It was announced this morning on the authority of Mrs. Whitfield who had it direct from the doctor himself that there was an epidemic of diphtheria in the village, three fatal cases, and seven dangerous ones, and it was unsafe for the children to go into the village. All the mothers were scared and only the positive and decidedly passionate declaration of Mr. Fetter that the whole story was a fabrication on very slight foundation, that he too had children and was not a poor man, so that if rumor was true he would himself shut up the hotel at once, kept them from packing their trunks and starting on masse for Deer Park led by Berta and Mrs. MacNair and followed by your family. He did however prevail, and on sending Perrin to 2 enquire we found that Mr. Fetter was correct in stating that there were only two cases slight and convalescing. The Dr. meanwhile had gone off to Deer Park so we could not get at him for confirmation of the story. Now poor Mrs. Whitfield is in rather bad order, and

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the question is whether the children will be allowed to go to her garden party tomorrow afternoon. She told us last night that she had heard there was those cases, but this morning according to Mrs. MacNair she had it positively from the physician which made it a different thing.

Did you find out where the Youngs get their water, I am a little afraid of well and rain-water, I have heard so much of filtration from the cesspool. The children are flourishing, Helen is not so well, she had fever last night and tonight, and we are very much relieved to have the Dr. just now declare it is only teething not anything more formidable. I believe from some questions asked me this afternoon that it was reported through the hotel that she had sore throat etc., etc.!!!

Goodbye and goodnight, I hope tonight at all events you will have a good night's sleep. Please attend to Miss Johnson and Mrs. Thayer.

Ever yours, Mabel.